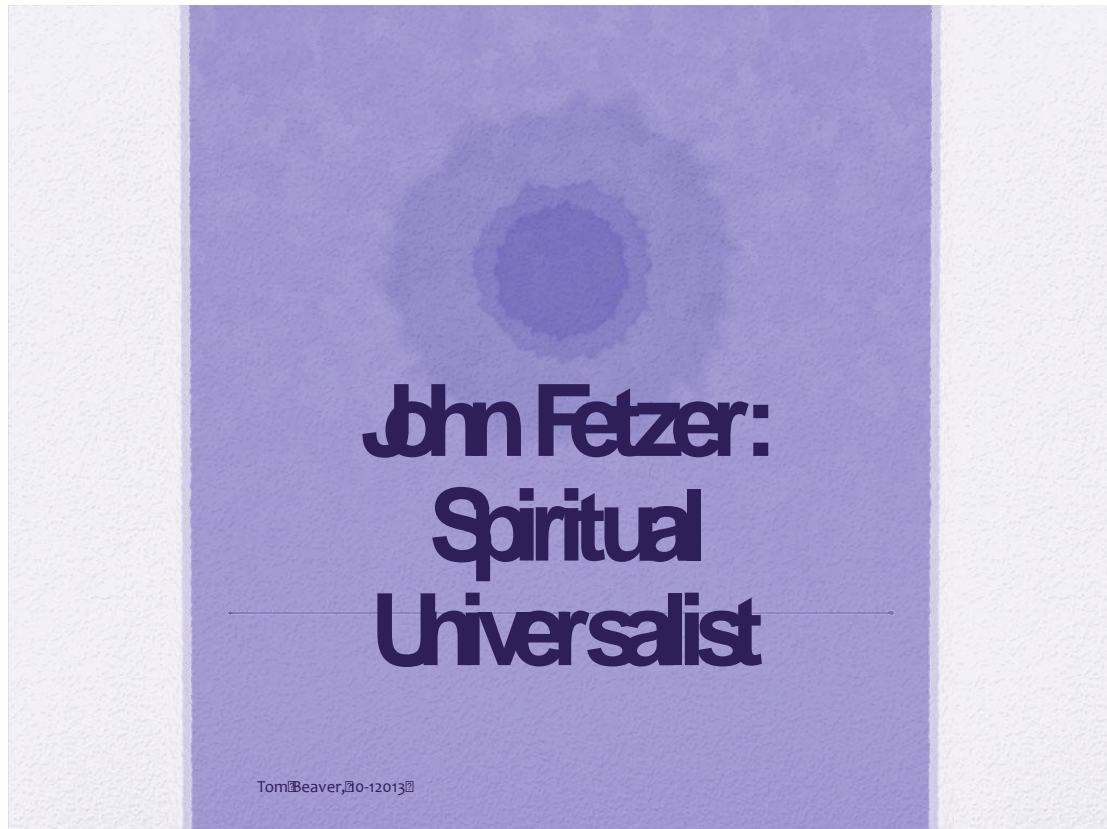


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**Fetzer as Universalist
(October 2013)**





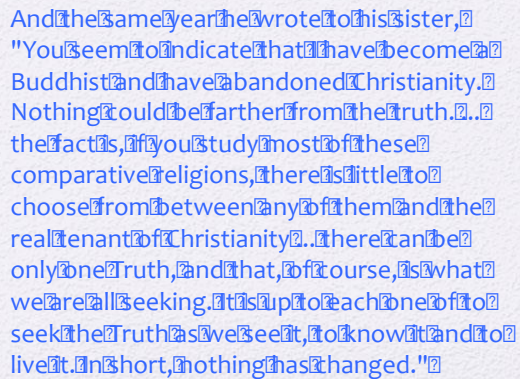
- John Fetzer walked his own particular and specific spiritual journey, just as each of us do. And so he ended up with a set of personal beliefs, as we each do as well.
- But I believe it is important for to emphasize that John never dictated that those associated with "Fetzer Inc." follow the same spiritual trail as him. He actually kept details of his own particular path rather private, and his more public pronouncements and admonitions were of a "spiritually universal" nature.
- ([Wikipedia says regarding Universalism](#): "Universalism refers to religious, theological, and philosophical concepts with universal application or applicability... Considering all people in their formation... A community that calls itself universalist may emphasize the universal principles of most religions and accept other religions in an inclusive manner.")

John actually put on the record over the years several strong statements that indicated his disinterest in any singular doctrinal approach.

- In a 1982 interview, when asked why he left Seventh Day Adventism in 1928, he said, "Seventh-Day Adventist people are highly doctrinaire."
- In "This I Believe" (1967), he wrote, "I am not addicted to church activity, although I have had exposure to strong fundamental religious teaching and have a long line of ancestral believers dating to the time of the Christian Crusade... It is my view that there is a crying need, the World over, for a new concept concerning the extra-terrestrial order of things in relation to individual spiritual needs."

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As to what John did consider to be essential to universal spirituality, it seemed to boil down to one key thing.

In both of John's writings, "This I Believe" and "America's Agony," he quoted from the Old Testament of the Bible, stating, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10).

In "This I Believe" (1967), he further stated that the one simple key component of the spiritual journey was "spiritual practice," writing, "No man can comprehend this (what he called, in this paper, 'the complete spiritual unification of life') until he has trained his mind to grasp this unification through the **deep silent and secret meditation from the center of his being** which is tantamount to illumination."

In his "Final Principles" to the EFL Trustees (1990) he wrote, "Listen (to spirit) so as to hear the ring of truth" and "Cry out for freedom" so that the "the consciousness of liberation is stirred within" and "turns in a spiral of consciousness, and brings one up into the higher focus" within.

In "The Men From Wengen and America's Agony" (1971) he wrote, "Look within to see God's presence.... It opens up a whole new line of communication between you and the Father." And he added, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10). Peace of mind is the result. Look within to see God's presence. And the Father are One becomes a truism.

Simply, John's primary spiritual message to us is to look to God in prayer/meditation for guidance. **Be receptive, ask for and listen for guidance.** This is the way for humankind to progress.

In John's view, that is the core of spirituality.

And, by the way, though I am far from an expert in Islam, I came across a passage in the Koran [25:63-66] promoting inner practice as well: "The worshipers of the Most Gracious are those who read the earth gently, and when the ignorant speak to them, they only utter peace. In the privacy of the night, they meditate on their Lord, and fall prostrate."



- And the Sufi branch of Islam expresses the same sense of inner practice. Rumi wrote of this, including:
 - "Sit quietly and listen for a voice that will say, 'Be more silent.' As that happens, your soul starts to revive."
 - "Let go of your mind and then be mindful. Close your ears and listen!"

- Buddhist and Hindu espousals of inner spiritual practice are common place as well.
- The Dalai Lama said, "We can never obtain peace in the world if we neglect the inner world and don't make peace with ourselves. World peace must develop out of inner peace."
- The Bhagavad Gita says, "Still your mind in me, still yourself in me, and without a doubt you shall be united with me, Lord of Love, dwelling in your heart."



In conclusion, the set of beliefs John wished to impart at Fetzer are few, and they are of basic importance to virtually all spiritual paths.

And the Fetzer Trustees have beautifully embodied them, I strongly believe. In the Fetzer Guiding Purpose: "To *awaken into* and *serve Spirit* for the transformation of self and society, based upon the principles of: wholeness of reality, freedom of spirit, and unconditional love; and the integration of *the inner life of mind and spirit* with the *outer life of service and action*."

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The question at hand for us, as the Institute moves forward in developing its spiritual community of freedom, may be: What is the role of inner work in developing spiritual community?

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